

R E V I E W.

Saturday, November 15. 1712.

BY the course of what I had laid down to Treat of, I should now come to give you a View of the *State of Religion* in this Nation; but I purpose to wave it for the present; however, I cannot agree with my own Method, without letting you know the Reason why I do so; this Paper being a Digression for the sake of Affairs in Scotland.)

It is not that I foresee, I must either leave off speaking plain, ungrateful Truth, or be sure to displease every Side of those I am speaking to, that I have this Discourse of Religion, for really pleasing Men, can not be charged upon me as the Sin of my Inclination and Practice; if it had, surely I am so destitute of common Sense, but I might, being now, have learnt to please *some-body* or other: but my Fate is to speak Truth of *every-body*, and therefore to please *no-body*; and let that be my Fate, till I can grow wise enough to be pleas'd with Truth, tho' be against them; and then I shall come in play among you again.

But why must not I speak to the *State of Religion*? Truly the Case is plain, every Side has a sore place, and if I touch it, they will kick me if they can; if I come to speak of the Church of *England*, what shall I say? The Ignorance of the common People, the Negligence and Immoralities of their Instructors, the Decay or entire Want of Discipline; the Oppression of *Dissenters*, and the acting contrary to profess'd Principles, all these must be part of my Theme; and the Case is hard, the Attempt is invidious, as Amendment, fruitless, and as I shall do little good, I am sure to gain much ill will *that Way*.

If I talk to the *Dissenters*, there the Case is the same kind; I must fall upon the Decay of their Zeal, the declining of their Ministry, their *Occasional Conforming*; being their Destruction; want of Concert with, and Confidence in one another; want of a true public Spirit among them, and the like; and who are Men that can bear the Reproof, or will forbear flinging Stones at the Reprover?

To what purpose then, shall we contend, or why should any Man run the Risk of telling you Truth at the Expence of his own Peace? Let others do it now, I have

done it long enough; and for these Reasons, I wave for the present, entering into the *State of Religion* among us, only telling you in general, that take it which Way you will, Religion is at a very low Ebb among us; much froth, little Substance, much show, little sincerity, nay, I must own, the very show of Religion, (a few politick Cases excepted) begins very much to abate among us.

But as I said, I shall wave all this; God mend you all, that Satyr, when he returns to the Subject, may find itself anticipated by your Reformation, which, by the Way, he very much doubts of.

But I cannot let you part, without giving you one Word in behalf of poor Scotland, a Nation to the highest degree, at least as I think, maltreated, nay, unkindly and unfriendly Treated by you all; I can compare it to nothing so well, as to a bad Husband, who had been the most passionate Woer imaginable, but uses his Wife like a Dog, as soon as he is married: *When the Union was making, all the Encouragement in the World was given to the Scots, to expect good Treatment at our Hands, and her Majesty, who does not willingly, I dare say, see the present distress of the People, gave us all Encouragement to use them well.*

It is not hard to point out the Instruments of the present Mischief, and what they aim at; but as I know who they are, and what is fit to say to them, so I know when to say it: The Mischief is not the Queen's doing, and every one knows it was a Storm upon the Ministry, and ever the Bellies of those, who some would have charg'd with it.—One Year more, and if I do not tell you whose Plot it is, and to what End Calculated, I'll be a Triennial Tale-bearer.—*Verb. Sap. sat.*

Nor can the *Whigs* be charg'd with this, tho' it is true, that but for one weak and contemptible Instrument, who never was thank'd for it, and who you would be loth to give the Honour of it, this had been done in the late Ministry, and they had had the Scandal of it too; nor did one *Whig* of them all think it worth their while, tho' they were timely entreated to do it, to move one Step to prevent it; however, I say they cannot be charg'd with it; But the Cause of the Church of Scotland, is the Cause of *Micah*,

Micah, ch. 7. 5. The Son dishonoureth the father, the Daughter riseth up against her Mother, and a Man's Enemies are the Men of his own House.

This is Scotland's present Case; her own Traytors are the Destroyers of her Constitution, and Overthrowers of her Church; the Treachery is in her own Bowels; these are they that would have had the Toleration of Jacobites been without the Obligation of the Oath of Abjuration; and these are they who will now take effectual care to Prosecute the Establish'd Ministers to the utmost, and to let the Jacobite Episcopal People go free.

But without any farther dipping into the Authors of all this new Mischief, of which I shall be more particular hereafter, let us enquire a little into the Matter of Fact, and state the Case to you, lest honest Men seem to you to suffer as Evil doers, when they are under the severest Persecution.

The Historical part is in few Words, thus; That the late Act of Parliament for a Toleration in Scotland, having impos'd the Abjuration-Oath upon all the Ministers of the Establish'd Church there; and the 1st. Day of this Instant November, being the utmost extent of Time granted for them to take it, upon pain of Deprivation, &c. as the Act directs; many of the Ministers in Scotland, nay, for ought I yet perceive, the greatest part of them will not take it, and must accordingly be turn'd out of their Livings, and the People in general have such an abhorrence of those that do comply, that it is fear'd they will in general forsake their Churches, and refuse to hear the Conforming Ministers.

I know it seems strange to you at first sight, to hear that the honest Presbyterians should refuse to abjure the Pretender, and were this the Case, it might be strange to us all; but that the honest People may not suffer in your Opinion, let me set you to right in this Case.

1. Negatively, it is evident they do not refuse the Oath in Favour of the Pretender, or on Jacobite Principles, nor would the same Instruments have concern'd themselves to have had the Oath impos'd on them, if that had been the Case.
2. Positively, that they do refuse it on a meer point of Conscience, several Things in the Oath being against their Principles.

It is well known, that by the Articles of the Union, and the Act of Security, no Oath is to be impos'd upon them contrary to their Principles; those are the express Words of the Act, and that therefore they al-

ledge this Oath ought not to be impos'd upon them.

The Thing they object, is this, that by the Oath they swear to reject any King of Great Britain, and forswear their Allegiance to him, unless such King be of the Communion of the Church of England.

1. Say they, *this is hard*, that as we are willing to submit to a Church of England King, yet if any Prince hereafter should be, or become a Presbyterian, that therefore, and *more* *quia Presbyterian*, we who are a Presbyterian Nation should renounce him.
2. They say this is an Erecting and Establishing Episcopacy by their own Consent, which they alledge they are sworn in the National Covenant to oppose.

To alleviate this difficulty, a Medium was propos'd in Parliament, which was found so just, that the House of Lords agreed to it in an Amendment; but the Commons disagreed, and *threw it out*, Accident! the Medium was this.

The Act says,

' You shall Maintain, &c. the Succession in the illustrious House of Hanover, &c. AS the Oath stands Limited by several Acts of Parliament in England: And then recites the Act; I am one of these Acts Limits the Succession to be only to such Persons of the House of Hanover as shall be of the Communion of the Church of England; the Ministers desir'd it might have been alter'd, to WHICH stands Limited — this would have made them ease, but it could not be obtain'd, and now the greatest part of the Ministers are like to be turn'd out of their Livings for refusing it.

I shall say no more, having stated the Fact to you in order to undeceive you, about your Brethren in Scotland, but this; It seems very hard, that an Establish'd National Church should be thus Overthrown, and so Faithful a People entirely broke ruin'd, for refusing an Oath, which by the Union ought not to be impos'd upon them, and for refusing it upon no Principles of Disloyalty or Disaffection to her Majesty, or of Favour to her Enemy the Pretender — I shall say more to this unaccountable Thing hereafter; I must own I dread the Consequences making a People Desperate by Oppression.